ED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/1981
19 September 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* General Assembly begins fiftieth session by electing Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal as its President.

* Security Council deplores rapidly escalating military situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; calls on parties to cease military activities and respect rights of civilian population.

* Two Danish peace-keepers killed during fighting between Croatian and Bosnian Serb forces around town of Dvor; United Nations holds Croatians directly responsible for incident.

* Secretary-General says world revolution is underway and only United Nations has network, experience and legitimacy to meet new challenges.

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The General Assembly today began its fiftieth session by electing Diogo Freitas do Amaral (Portugal) as its President. In his statement to the Assembly, Mr. do Amaral said that despite its failures in the past fifty years, the United Nations had achieved its principal goal of preventing a third world war. It had also contributed decisively to progress in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to the peace processes in Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique and other countries.

The United Nations had done more than any other institution to guarantee the primacy of international law, President do Amaral said. Without the rule of law, humanity could know neither peace nor freedom. In that regard, the International Court of Justice deserved special recognition. The Organization had made human rights universal, by inducing Members to accept that the state existed to serve man and not vice-versa. It had also affirmed second-generation fundamental rights, particularly economic, social and cultural ones, and was today focusing attention on third-generation rights, particularly with regard to the protection of nature and the environment.

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ones, and was today focusing attention on third-generation rights, particularly with regard to the protection of nature and the environment.

Decolonization and the end of apartheid were major victories for the United Nations, the President continued. The Organization had also assisted the process of democratization in numerous countries that had decided of their own free will to move from a single-party to a multi-party system. One of the most important and overlooked aspects of the United Nations was the work done by its specialized bodies and agencies to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the world's poorest and neediest countries.

Mr. do Amaral called attention to the problems of the present and the prospects for the future. A new international order was beginning to take shape, but its form was still vague, confused and imprecise. The cold war was over but peace had yet to be consolidated, flare-ups of radical nationalism had yet to be brought under control, and human rights had yet to be guaranteed in many parts of the world. At the same time, the United Nations must be reformed and strengthened with the aim of ensuring the peaceful coexistence and equitable development of all the world's peoples.

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The Security Council has deplored the rapidly escalating military situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and expressed deep concern about the resulting plight of the civilian population. In a statement by its President, Francesco Paolo Fulci (Italy), last night, the Council demanded that all the parties involved immediately cease military activities and hostile acts in western Bosnia, and fully respect the rights of the local population.

The Council reiterated that there could be no military solution to the Bosnian conflict and urged the parties not to take advantage of the present situation. It once again expressed its full support for the Geneva Declaration of Principles of 8 September, which provided a basis for negotiations for a lasting peace throughout the region.

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Two Danish peace-keepers were killed and eight were injured yesterday during an exchange of fire between Croatian and Bosnian Serb forces around the town of Dvor, according to a United Nations spokesman. The peace-keepers' bunker was hit by a Serb shell, but the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) held the Croatian Army directly responsible for the incident. The Croatians had deliberately placed their firing positions close to United Nations facilities in the expectation of return fire from the Serbs.

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic announced this morning that Croatian forces had been instructed to stop their advance in western Bosnia, the spokesman noted. However, no similar instructions were issued to the

Bosnian forces in the area. There were reports that the situation had stabilized somewhat south and north-west of Banja Luka, although more than 100,000 Serb refugees were still on the move as a result of the recent fighting.

Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serbs continued to withdraw their heavy weapons from the 20-kilometre exclusion zone around Sarajevo. The Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), General Bernard Janvier, met today with the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Rupert Smith, to assess the level of Serb compliance with United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) demands in that regard.

* * *

The world is crying out for peace and for the economic and social development that peace alone can assure, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement for the International Day of Peace, he said that the goal for the General Assembly's historic fiftieth session should be kept clear and simple -- it should be peace.

At a luncheon at Headquarters today, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that a world revolution was underway which required a new system for international relations. While the sovereign State was the only foundation for such a system, the State alone could not act with the powers it once had. A true international community must be created through the work the United Nations. Only the United Nations offered an integrated approach based on its global network, matchless experience and universal legitimacy.

Regarding the performance of the United Nations, political will, not structure, was the issue, the Secretary-General stressed. Reform was necessary within the Secretariat, but the real arena for reform was the intergovernmental area. "The future is ours to build," he continued. "The United Nations is the place where it can be done. And without the United Nations, it cannot be done."

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ED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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20 September 1995

W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Secretary-General says UNPROFOR should be replaced by ad hoc coalition of Member States to support implementation of hoped-for peace agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* United Nations again urges immediate cessation of military activities in western Bosnia, citing worsening refugee crisis and ongoing peace process.

* High Commissioner for Human Rights appeals for more funding for Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda; talks on repatriation of Rwandan refugees to begin in Geneva on Monday.

* United Nations and NGOs must forge new partnership to address global challenges, Special Adviser Green tells DPI/NGO Conference.

* Secretary-General to convene seventh round of talks on East Timor in London on 16 January 1996.

* Secretary-General to address interfaith prayer service commemorating fiftieth anniversary of United Nations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that as soon as a peace agreement is concluded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he will recommend that the Security Council authorize an ad hoc coalition of Member States to support its implementation. He did so in a letter to the President of the Council dated 18 September. The letter set out observations made following his in-depth review of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with senior aides on Saturday.

The proposed coalition would act as appropriate with regional organizations or arrangements, according to the Secretary-General. Aspects of the peace agreement relating to the relief and return of refugees and displaced persons would continue to be entrusted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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If the current peace initiative did not succeed and the Security Council decided upon more enforcement action, UNPROFOR should be replaced by a multinational force authorized to carry out such action and to assume responsibility for those aspects of the Force's mandate which would remain valid, he continued. In either case, urgent action would be required to prepare for an expeditious hand-over by UNPROFOR to the multinational force.

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The United Nations has again urged the parties in western Bosnia to immediately cease all military activities so as not to exacerbate the refugee crisis or disrupt the ongoing peace process. There were reports today that fighting in the area had subsided, but the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was unable to confirm that the offensive by Bosnian Government and Croatian forces had halted. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the numbers of refugees was rising daily and warned that if the fighting continued, the situation could develop into one of the worst refugee tragedies of the war.

Meanwhile, UNPROFOR announced that the Bosnian Serbs had moved a total of 232 heavy weapons out of the Sarajevo exclusion zone as of last night. The Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), General Bernard Janvier, met today with UNPROFOR Commander General Rupert Smith and Admiral Leighton Smith of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to determine whether the Serbs had complied sufficiently with demands in that regard. In another development, UNPROFOR expressed outrage and anger after Bosnian Government forces fired three mortar rounds out of the city.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, today appealed for more funding for the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda. He told correspondents at Headquarters that the Operation had only enough money to operate through November. It had cost only $10 million in its first year, which was not much compared with the money spent on the refugee crisis alone. Financial constraints meant that the Operation could not achieve its full strength of 147 human rights field officers, and financial insecurity negatively affected mid- and long-term planning.

In spite of many obstacles, the Field Operation had developed a comprehensive and pro-active programme to address past, present and potential human rights violations in Rwanda, Mr. Ayala Lasso continued. It had gathered vital evidence for the International Tribunal and continued to document how the genocide had been perpetrated last year. The Operation had also helped the Rwandan Government to practically rebuild the national system of justice.

In a related development, officials from Zaire, Rwanda and the UNHCR will begin talks in Geneva on Monday on the process of repatriating more than one million Rwandan refugees.

* * *

A new partnership must be forged between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations to address daunting global challenges, according to Assistant Secretary-General Rosario Green, Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General. She said yesterday that the Secretariat was looking at structures and mechanisms through which the Organization interacted with the non-governmental organization community. She made those comments in a statement to the Department of Public Information (DPI) Conference for NGOs.

Speaking during a special session of the Conference on the World Week of Peace, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Betty Williams stated that military budgets were "insane and must be stopped." Citing the cease-fire in Northern Ireland, she said that a philosophy of non-violence worked and that "safe areas" should be created so that children could grow up in peace.

* * *

The Secretary-General will hold a seventh round of talks on the question of East Timor with the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal in London on 16 January 1996. In a report to the General Assembly dated 15 September, he said they would continue discussions on the substantive issues identified by him regarding possible avenues for a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution. The Ministers began discussions on such issues as the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of the East Timorese people and bilateral relations between them at the sixth round of talks in Geneva last July.

* * *

An interfaith prayer service will be convened at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The service will bring together leaders of different spiritual traditions and faiths and will highlight the spiritual threads which unite all people and reflect the purpose, ideals and accomplishments of the Organization. The Secretary-General is expected to deliver an address.

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D NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations and NATO say Bosnian Serbs have withdrawn heavy weapons from Sarajevo exclusion zone and resumption of air strikes is currently not necessary.

* General Committee recommends 167-item agenda for fiftieth session of General Assembly; rejects item on Republic of China on Taiwan in international context.

* General Assembly President says United Nations should make itself better known for work in fields of development, humanitarian assistance and international law.

* UNCTAD to hold high-level meeting at Headquarters from 26 September to 6 October to discuss how to improve living standards in least developed countries.

* Somali faction releases seven international aid workers detained in Baidoa; negotiations continue for release of remaining 14 detainees.

* * *

The Bosnian Serbs have withdrawn defined heavy weapons from the Sarajevo exclusion zone and the resumption of air strikes is currently not necessary, according to Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier, United Nations Force Commander, and Admiral Leighton Smith of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In a joint statement issued last night, they noted that Sarajevo airport remained open and that United Nations and humanitarian traffic had unimpeded access to the city.

General Janvier and Admiral Smith said the Bosnian Serbs had expressed their willingness to discuss a cessation of hostilities agreement at any time. They urged all parties to join the Serbs and finalize a cessation of hostilities agreement for the Sarajevo Area with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), with a view to extending it to a complete and country-wide cessation of hostilities at the earliest opportunity. They warned that any

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For information media—not an official record

subsequent attack on Sarajevo or any other safe area, or other non-compliance with the exclusion zone, could lead to the resumption of air strikes.

A United Nations spokesman today announced that the Bosnian Serbs had withdrawn or destroyed some 250 heavy weapons from around Sarajevo, including four anti-aircraft weapons. He expressed concern that the number of firing incidents in the city had increased for the third day in a row yesterday, albeit to a historically low 237. Meanwhile, the situation was reported to have stabilized in western Bosnia. However, restrictions on movement and poor weather made it difficult for the United Nations to confirm that offensive operations had halted in the area.

* * *

The General Committee has recommended that the fiftieth General Assembly adopt an agenda of 167 items. Among the new items recommended for inclusion were the report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, multilingualism, Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, and strengthening of the United Nations system. Recommendations on the inclusion of agenda items and their allocation to the Assembly's six Main Committees were made during a review of the Secretary-General's memorandum on the Organization of work for the session.

The Committee did not recommend that the Assembly consider the "exceptional situation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the international context, based on the principle of universality and in accordance with the established model of parallel representation of divided countries at the United Nations" as proposed by several States. In a long debate, many speakers supported the initiative, stating that the 21 million people of Taiwan were not represented at the United Nations, in violation of the principle of neutrality. However, numerous speakers opposed the initiative, saying that it violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China.

* * *

While reform of the United Nations is a vital undertaking, the Organization deserves more credit for its successes in many fields, according to General Assembly President Diogo Freitas do Amaral (Portugal). He told correspondents at Headquarters that some people focused only on issues of war and peace. The United Nations should thus make itself better known for its work in the fields of development, economic and social welfare, humanitarian assistance and international law. World public opinion should know about the tremendous and positive work of specialized agencies and bodies.

The President expressed the hope that the General Assembly's new working group to review proposals to revitalize, strengthen and reform the United Nations system would have a blueprint for action by the end of the fiftieth session. He stressed that he wanted to be a reformer President, not a mere

ceremonial one, and to help transform the United Nations of the twentieth century into the United Nations of the twenty-first century.

As the only body which represented all Member States, the General Assembly should have a closer relationship with the Security Council, he went on to say. To that end, there should be a direct, permanent dialogue between the Presidents of the Assembly and the Council. The Assembly President should be well informed about everything that went on in the Council, he added.

* * *

Ministers and senior officials from developed and developing countries will meet at Headquarters from 26 September to 6 October to discuss ways of improving the living standards of the one-tenth of the world's population in the least developed countries. The high-level intergovernmental meeting will undertake a Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for those countries for the 1990s, which was adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Paris in September 1990. It will also identify concrete national and international actions to accelerate implementation of the Programme.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) currently identifies 48 countries as least developed, of which 33 are in Africa. Their combined population is estimated at 560 million. They had an average per capita income of $300 in 1993, compared to $900 in the developing world as a whole and $21,600 in the developed market economies. The Programme of Action aimed at arresting the deterioration in socio-economic conditions in the poorest countries, and setting them on the path of sustained growth and development through a series of national and international actions.

* * *

General Mohamed Farah Aideed's forces have released seven women from among the 21 international aid workers held captive in Baidoa, Somalia, since earlier in the week. The seven -- two United Nations staff members and five non-government organization employees -- were flown out of the country yesterday. Negotiations are under way for the release of the remaining 14 workers, ten of whom are United Nations staff members.

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UNITED NATIONS

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council extends MINURSO mandate until 31 January 1996; calls on parties in Western Sahara to cease all delaying actions and cooperate with Mission.

* Security Council calls for immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* General Assembly adopts agenda with 164 items for its fiftieth session.

* International Court of Justice dismisses New Zealand's action to halt French nuclear tests in South Pacific.

* Donors to meet in Brussels on 25 September to mobilize resources for peace process and development in Angola.

* Somali faction frees last of international aid workers held captive in Baidoa.

* IFAD Executive Board recommends micro-lending and grants be increased by 5 per cent to $434 million in 1996.

* UNCTAD Trade and Development Board recommends UNCTAD IX be convened in South Africa in April 1996.

* * *

The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 January 1996. It requested the Secretary-General to report by 15 January 1996 on progress towards the implementation of the Settlement Plan, stating whether or not the transitional period could begin by 31 May 1996. It noted that if the conditions necessary for the start of the transitional period were not in place before 31 January, the Secretary-General would present alternative options for consideration, including the possible withdrawal of the Mission.

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By unanimously adopting resolution 1017 (1995), the Council called on the parties to work with the Secretary-General and MINURSO to implement the Settlement Plan. They should abandon their insistence on strict reciprocity in the operation of identification centres and cease all other procrastinating actions which could further delay the holding of the referendum. The Council stressed the need to accelerate implementation of the Settlement Plan and urged the Secretary-General to examine ways of reducing the Mission's operational costs.

* * *

The Security Council last night called on all parties and others concerned to refrain from violence and hostile acts and to reach an immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. By unanimously adopting resolution 1016 (1995), it called on Member States involved in promoting a peace settlement to intensify their efforts with the parties, to ensure that they took no advantage from the current situation and showed utmost restraint.

The Council expressed deep concern at the military situation on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at the plight of the civilian population, which constituted a humanitarian crisis of significant proportions. It expressed special concern about the humanitarian consequences of the recent fighting, including loss of life and a new flow of refugees and displaced persons. The Council noted the assurances given by the Bosnian and Croatian Governments regarding offensive actions in western Bosnia.

A United Nations spokesman today reported that the recent offensive in western Bosnia had almost stopped, although resupply operations and minor skirmishes were continuing. The level of fighting around Doboj and Maglaj also decreased in the past 24 hours. There were fewer firing incidents in Sarajevo, and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) continued to enjoy freedom of movement across the airport routes.

* * *

The General Assembly today adopted a 164-item agenda for its fiftieth session. The agenda covers a wide range of political, disarmament, economic, social and humanitarian matters, as well as legal, administrative and budgetary questions.

The new items to be considered in plenary concern: cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union; report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization; observer status for the Central American Integration system; multilingualism; cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation; World

Summit for Social Development; Universal Congress on the Panama Canal; and strengthening of the United Nations System.

In addition, a new item on the role of the Trusteeship Council will initially be considered in plenary and subsequently in the Sixth Committee (Legal). The Assembly will also consider a new sub-item on the sustainable use and conservation of the marine living resources of the high seas. Another new item, on normalization of the situation concerning South Africa, has not yet been allocated. Consideration of the question of Cyprus has also not yet been allocated.

* * *

The International Court of Justice today dismissed New Zealand's request for an examination of the situation relating to France's nuclear testing in the South Pacific. The Court decided by 12 votes to 3 that the request did not fall within the relevant provisions of its 1974 judgement in a case between the two countries concerning nuclear testing. Consequently, New Zealand's request for provisional measures and applications for permission to intervene submitted by Australia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia were also dismissed.

New Zealand had requested the Court to declare that French nuclear tests would constitute a violation of the rights of New Zealand and other States, under international law, by introducing radioactive material into the marine environment. It had also sought a declaration that it would be unlawful for France to conduct nuclear tests at Mururoa and Fangataufa Atolls before undertaking an environmental impact assessment according to accepted international standards.

* * *

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will hold a round-table meeting of donors in Brussels on 25 and 26 September to mobilize resources for the peace process and development in Angola. The President of Angola, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, will preside over the meeting. The leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Jonas Savimbi, will also attend.

An estimated $700 million is needed to consolidate the Angolan peace process, revive the economy, rebuild infrastructure and improve living standards. More than 1.25 million Angolans were classified as internally displaced persons last year, while some 280,000 were refugees in neighbouring countries.

Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye yesterday presided over a session of the Joint Commission in Luanda. The Commission, which reviews the peace process and implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, noted a significant

drop in the number of cease-fire violations. It also expressed satisfaction with the creation of a permanent military committee to monitor the military situation.

* * *

General Mohamed Farah Aideed's forces have now released all of the international aid workers taken captive in Baidoa, Somalia, earlier in the week. The remaining 14 detainees - ten United Nations staff members and four non-government organization employees -- arrived today in Nairobi, Kenya.

* * *

The Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has recommended an increase of 5 per cent in the Fund's 1996 programme of work, which would bring it to over $434 million. It took that action at the end of its fifty-fifth session in Rome. The proposed increase should be formally endorsed by the IFAD Governing Council in January.

Almost $30 million would be extended in the form of technical assistance grants for technology development and transfer. The remaining $505 million would support a micro-lending programme for over 30 new projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

* * *

The Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has recommended that UNCTAD IX be convened from 27 April to 11 May 1996 in Midrand, near Johannesburg, South Africa. The Board decided to hold a special preparatory session from 11 to 15 December, during which it will review the functioning of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery since 1992.

During its autumn session in Geneva, the Board also discussed such issues as global interdependence and prospects for the world economy, and the problem of unemployment in developed countries. In addition, the UNCTAD secretariat was asked to address the negative trade-related effects on neighbouring countries of United Nations economic sanctions on parts of the former Yugoslavia.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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25 September 1995

MONDAY HIGHLITES

* United Nations must direct its limited resources to world's highest priorities, focusing on tasks it performs best, United States Secretary of State tells General Assembly.

* Foreign Minister of Togo says Africa needs more assistance to participate in global economy, including fairer commodity prices, technology transfers and debt reduction.

* Norwegian Foreign Minister calls on governments to empower United Nations to pursue its goals with renewed vigour; stresses need to narrow gap between rich and poor.

* Secretary-General expresses strong support for United States peace initiative in former Yugoslavia; says successful outcome will enable United Nations to reduce troop levels in region.

* Secretary-General calls on Abkhaz leadership to return to negotiating table with specific proposals to advance peace process.

* UNHCR urges Croatia to reconsider directive revoking refugee status of tens of thousands of Bosnians; says forced repatriation would violate Geneva Convention on Refugees.

* DPI and media have joint objective of making world more aware of United Nations activities, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information says.

* WHO says incomplete and harmful tuberculosis treatment practices threaten lives of HIV-positive people.

* IAEA General Conference elects eleven member States to Agency's Board of Governors.

* United Nations University to hold public seminar on likely consequences of powerful earthquake in Tokyo area.

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The agenda of the United Nations must be shaped as if the Organization were being created anew, according to United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Addressing the General Assembly as it began its general debate today, he said the United Nations must direct its limited resources to the world's highest priorities, focusing on the tasks it performed best. Its bureaucracy should be smaller, with a clear organizational structure and sharp lines of responsibility. Each programme must be held to a simple standard -- it must make a tangible contribution to the freedom, security and well-being of real people in the real world.

It was necessary to end United Nations programmes that had achieved their purpose, and consolidate those that overlapped, especially in the economic and social agencies, Mr. Christopher continued. The Secretariat should be streamlined to make it more efficient, accountable and efficient. Proposals for new and extended peace-keeping missions should be rigorously scrutinized, and the Organization's ability to respond rapidly when new missions were approved should be improved. Finally, the effectiveness of the Security Council must be maintained. Germany and Japan should become permanent members, while all of the world's regions should be fairly represented.

There was no area where the United Nations could make a more significant contribution than in non-proliferation, the Secretary of State went on to say. He stressed the need for a comprehensive test ban treaty, and for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Meanwhile, the United States and the countries of the former Soviet Union should sharply reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals. The United Nations should also promote responsibility and restraint in the transfer of conventional weapons, with a view to ending the export of land-mines.

The United States had made a commitment to the Charter fifty years ago and was determined to keep it, including its financial obligations, Mr. Christopher said. Just as the founders of the United Nations had devised a new framework to deter aggression and armed conflict, the Organization must now assign the same priority to combating proliferation, terrorism, international crime, narcotics and environmental pollution. "We should dedicate our efforts in the United Nations and elsewhere to turning our global consensus against these threats into concrete action," he concluded. "We must renew and reform the United Nations not for its sake, but for our own."

* * *

In an address to the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Yandja Yentchabre of Togo today called for greater attention to be paid to preventive diplomacy, disarmament and development. He welcomed the progress made towards peace in Liberia and Angola, but expressed concern over continued fighting in Sierra Leone. Saying Africa needed special assistance to participate in the global economy, he called for fairer prices for commodities, more transfers of technology, and a reduction in the continent's debt burden, which now stood at $313 billion.

The Foreign Minister said the development of Africa required the mobilization of financial resources through official development assistance and private investment. The international community should also do more to combat poverty. He noted that the number of poor people in Africa had risen from 105 million in 1985 to 216 million in 1990. Unless measures were taken, it could reach 304 million by the year 2000.

* * *

The Foreign Minister of Norway, Bjorn Tore Godal, today called on governments to empower the United Nations to work with renewed vigour in promoting peace, human rights, sustainable development and international understanding. In an address to the General Assembly, he also voiced support for United Nations reform, restructuring and modernization, including the expansion of the Security Council. Citing the Organization's financial crisis, he said the assessment system should be reformed without delay.

To meet the challenges of peace and sustainable development, Foreign Minister Godal proposed five parallel paths for the United Nations and its Member States: an increase in local and regional capacity to handle conflict situations; an increase in the number of States contributing to peace-keeping forces; an improvement in the Organization's rapid reaction and stand-by capability; greater emphasis on conflict-prevention measures; and decisive action in promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty. "As long as the gap between rich and poor, whether between States or within States, continues to widen, we cannot claim to be on the right track," he said.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed strong support for the United States peace initiative in the former Yugoslavia. Meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke on Friday evening, he said he hoped that a successful outcome to the peace talks resuming tomorrow would enable the United Nations to reduce its troop levels in the region. He noted that the Organization was owed $3.4 billion, and that peace-keeping operations there were

costing $5 million a day.

Mr. Holbrooke briefed the Secretary-General on the progress made in the peace negotiations and outlined their possible future courses. He stressed the need for full implementation of the agreed measures to ease the siege of Sarajevo.

* * *

The Secretary-General has called on the Abkhaz leadership to return to the negotiating table with specific proposals that will enable the peace process to move forward and permit the early return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. He made that call on Friday, following a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Georgia, Alexander Chikvaidze. The Foreign Minister briefed him on efforts to find a political solution to the conflict in Abkhazia.

Noting with concern the recent rise in tension in the Gali region and the calls from some quarters to resolve the situation by a return to military action, the Secretary-General urged the continuation of maximum restraint.

* * *

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata today urged the Croatian Government to reconsider a directive revoking the refugee status of tens of thousands of Bosnians in Croatia. The directive stated that the refugees would be returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the Bosnian Government and Bosnian Croat authorities.

Mrs. Ogata said the ill-timed directive could mean the forced return of refugees to an area that was neither safe nor prepared to receive them. Such an action would violate the fundamental principle of non-refoulement contained in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, to which Croatia was a signatory. Any large-scale repatriation must be dealt with in the context of the overall peace process, in accordance with international standards, she stressed.

* * *

The Department of Public Information (DPI) and the media have the joint objective of making the world more aware of the activities of the United Nations, according to Assistant Secretary-General Samir Sanbar. Speaking on United Nations Television's World Chronicle today, he said the Department sometimes had difficulty explaining the Organization's position without offending any of the 185 Member States. It thus regarded the media as an ally which could disseminate important information to a wide audience.

Mr. Sanbar said the general public in the United States and elsewhere was generally supportive of the United Nations in principle, although critical of some activities in practice. He pointed out that the Organization had to respond to increased demands at a time of decreased resources. Those demands were also becoming more complex -- peace-keeping operations now had major humanitarian and political components and meant dealing with warlords and non-governmental groups.

The United Nations did not just look to Member States for financial and material resources, Mr. Sanbar continued. It also needed sustained political will to carry operations through to the end. He stressed the need for a culture of public information within the Organization, saying the DPI and the media were "two sides of the same coin."

* * *

Incomplete and harmful tuberculosis treatment practices rob years of life from almost a third of all HIV-positive people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). It said that the most common error in treating TB patients was failing to ensure that they took their medicine every day. Other errors included failing to diagnose TB in HIV-positive people, and prescribing the anti-TB drug thiacetazone, which could be fatal to them.

WHO estimated that 266,000 HIV-positive people would die from potentially treatable TB this year. It said patients could probably gain more than two years of healthy life with an improved TB treatment strategy known as directly observed treatment, short-course (DOTS). Under the DOTS regimen, health workers or volunteers ensure that patients take a combination of anti-TB medicines for a six-month period.

* * *

The General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) has elected eleven member States to the IAEA Board of Governors. The eleven are: Bulgaria, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Romania and Saudi Arabia.

The other 24 members of the Board of Governors are: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uruguay.

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The United Nations University (UNU) will hold a public seminar on Wednesday to assess the likely consequences of a powerful earthquake in the Tokyo area. The seminar, part of a three-day international workshop, is being organized jointly with the University of Tokyo's International Centre for Disaster-Mitigation Engineering.

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TED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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26 September 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council holds Ministerial Meeting to commemorate fiftieth anniversary of United Nations; reaffirms its commitment to maintenance of international peace and security.

* Secretary-General says Security Council has been functioning more flexibly and creatively than ever before; notes interactive and dynamic relationship with Secretariat.

* United Nations cannot afford peace-keeping operations in former Yugoslavia, Secretary-General says.

* Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia reach agreement providing for free, fair and direct elections in Bosnia.

* United Nations must continue to improve mechanisms to protect human rights while maintaining universal standards, Russian Federation tells General Assembly.

* United Kingdom warns United Nations is on verge of financial collapse and needs new financing arrangements; says disengagement and disorder cost more than peace-keeping.

* Japan proposes new development strategy based on realistic targets, broad-based participation and increased South-South cooperation.

* International community must act urgently and effectively to revitalize growth in least developed countries, Secretary-General tells Intergovernmental Meeting on LDCs.

* Secretary-General calls for elimination of land-mines once and for all; says use and production should be banned and stockpiles destroyed.

* Donors attending UNDP meeting in Brussels pledge $500 million for peace process and development in Angola.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

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The Security Council met today at the level of Foreign Ministers to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and to exchange views on the challenges which the Council faced. In a statement by its President, Susanna Agnelli (Italy), the Council said it had played a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security, on which development and cooperation among nations were based.

The past few years had been ones of momentous change, bringing fresh hope and new challenges, the statement continued. Operations mandated by the Council had helped to restore peace and stability to countries plagued by war. Although such operations had largely been successful, there were areas where success had not been achieved. The Council must continue to spare no effort in working for the maintenance of international peace and security, and build on its experiences of past and existing operations.

The Council recognized that the challenges facing the international community demanded a resolute response, based on the principles and purposes of the Charter. The United Nations must be strengthened and revitalized to help meet those challenges. Members noted the conclusions of the General Assembly's Working Group on the Security Council, among them, that the Council should be expanded and its working methods reviewed, in a way that strengthened its capacity and effectiveness, enhanced its representative character and improved its efficiency and transparency, and that important differences existed on key issues.

"The members of the Security Council reaffirm their commitment to the collective security system of the Charter," the statement concluded. "On the solemn occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Council, along with other United Nations bodies, commemorates what has been achieved so far, but also commits itself once again to the maintenance of international peace and security for which it has primary responsibility, and to working to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

* * *

The Security Council has been functioning more flexibly, continuously and creatively than ever before, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told today's Ministerial Meeting of the Council. Along with its more traditional responses in resolving conflicts, he said, the Council had taken pioneering positions on sanctions, preventive deployment, international war crimes tribunals, confidence-building and democratization. The work had often been frustrating, but the

The Council's performance should inspire all who made decisions in an age of ambiguity and change.

The ever-increasing and varied agenda of the Security Council had placed new demands on the Secretariat, which was itself adapting to new realities, the Secretary-General continued. He stressed his determination to make the Secretariat more effective in carrying out the tasks assigned to it by the Council. For several years, the Council had succeeded in achieving consensus on most of its decisions. At the same time, the relationship between the Secretariat and the Council had become more interactive and dynamic. The two must continue to work together to improve their methods and their actions.

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During his meetings with Ministers yesterday and today, the Secretary-General emphasized the critical nature of United Nations finances, and "how absolutely essential it is that the UN get out of the former Yugoslavia," according to a spokesman. Peace-keeping operations in the region were costing $5 million a day and could not be sustained, he said. In contrast, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) cost $25 million a year.

Member States owed the United Nations a total of $3.59 billion as of 15 September, the spokesman reported. Almost $850 million was owed to the regular budget and $2.74 billion was for peace-keeping. The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed nearly $530 million to the regular budget and $1.05 billion to peace-keeping. The Russian Federation owed more than $20 million to the regular budget and $570 million to peace-keeping.

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At a meeting at Headquarters today, representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) reached an agreement providing for free, fair and direct elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnian Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey told correspondents that he was cautiously optimistic regarding the implementation of the agreement. He said assurances had been given that the elections would not be based on standards imposed by dictators and war criminals.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would not settle for sham elections dictated by despots to undermine democracy under the cover of an international peace agreement, Mr. Sacirbey continued. The success of the negotiating process would be measured by whether or not war criminals were brought to justice and dictators swept out of power, not by paper agreements signed by such dictators and criminals. He added that elections could not be free, fair or democratic until basic respect for human rights was established and war criminals were tried by the International Tribunal.

* * *

The United Nations must continue to improve mechanisms for the protection of human rights, primarily by strengthening its control and preventive functions, according to Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. In an address to the General Assembly today, he stressed the importance of single standards in the area of human rights and basic democratic institutions. Citing the dangers posed by fascism, racism and religious extremism, he said the international community must not tolerate the emergence of double standards. The Assembly should take action during the current session on such issues as the struggle against racism, all forms of xenophobia and aggressive nationalism, ensuring the rights of minorities, and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law in countries in transition.

The policy of single standards must also apply to the sphere of peace-keeping, Mr. Kozyrev continued. "Justice without force is powerless while force without justice is tyrannical," he said. It was necessary to radically improve United Nations peace-keeping, with close linkage between peace-keeping operations and efforts to peacefully settle conflicts, and better planning, command and control. The United Nations should be actively involved in the development of a new model of general and comprehensive security for Europe. It should also take urgent measures on the prevention of illicit trafficking of light firearms and proliferation of anti-personnel mines. He called for a universal and permanent moratorium on nuclear tests, with a view to concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996.

* * *

The United Nations is on the verge of financial collapse, and its financing arrangements must be changed, United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Malcom Rifkind told the General Assembly today. Noting that 39 Member States had made no payments to the Organization last year, he said penalties should be tightened for non-payment and interest charged on late payments. "Perhaps an appropriate policy could best be entitled no representation without taxation," he stated. At the same time, some Members paid too much. The scale of assessments should be simplified, and should reflect a country's real capacity to pay.

The world needed a strong, effective United Nations and the cost was not high, he continued. Multilateral action was not an add-on to national policy; it gave wider legitimacy to such valued principles as human rights and democracy. The bill for all United Nations peace-keeping, aid and development operations in 1994 equaled 3.5 per cent of the United States defense budget. One day of Operation Desert Storm cost as much as the year's peace-keeping. "The price of disengagement and disorder would be greater," he concluded. "Public support is there. Even in the United States, polls are clear: people support the UN; they support international peace-keeping. We have a duty to our electorates to continue the UN's work."

* * *

In his address to the Assembly, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Yohei Kono, stressed the importance of development, conflict prevention and disarmament. He proposed a new development strategy with three major guidelines: the establishment of realistic targets; the promotion of participatory development, involving central and local governments and non-governmental organizations; and the promotion of "South-South" cooperation, including the establishment of an effective mechanism for that purpose within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Mr. Kono deplored recent nuclear tests and said disarmament efforts must be redoubled. Japan intended to sponsor a draft resolution calling for the cessation of nuclear testing during the Assembly's current session, as well as a draft resolution on the establishment of a panel of experts to address the issue of the proliferation of small arms. He reiterated Japan's readiness to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council, and urged all Member States to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement on a broad framework for United Nations reform by September 1996.

* * *

The international community must act urgently and effectively to halt social and economic decline and revitalize growth in the least developed countries (LDCs), according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement to the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-Term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs for the 1990s, he said a lack of external support was a key reason why the hopes of the 1990 Paris Declaration had not materialized.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali set out five broad objectives for international action: the debt burden must be lifted; there must be greater financial flows to LDCs; those countries must have greater access to markets and better terms of trade; commercial investment in them must be encouraged; and an adequate infrastructure for development must be put in place. A stronger sense of purpose -- and partnership -- was now required, he added.

Participants in the opening session elected Norwegian Minister of Development Cooperation Kari Nordheim as President of the Meeting. She announced that Norway would contribute an extra $10 million to the UNDP Trust Fund for Good Governance. It would also give high priority to the issue of population growth, allocating at least four per cent of development assistance to population programmes.

* * *

The Secretary-General today called for the elimination of land-mines once and for all. In a videotaped message to the high-level segment of the Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

in Vienna, he said the use and production of land-mines should be banned and stockpiles destroyed.

Land-mines killed or wounded more than 20,000 people every year, the Secretary-General noted. Most of those people were not combatants, but were farmers, women or children. Meanwhile, the situation was worsening -- 100,000 land-mines were cleared every year but 2 to 5 million more were laid. He appealed to all States to ratify or accede to the Convention and its Protocols.

* * *

Donors meeting in Brussels yesterday pledged some $500 million for the peace process and development in Angola, and more pledges were expected today, according to the UNDP. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola and the leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Jonas Savimbi, used the occasion to reiterate their support for the consolidation of peace in their country.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Member States, not alleged shortcomings of United Nations, are to blame for setbacks in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany tells General Assembly.

* China sets out guidelines for peace-keeping operations; says reform process must strengthen, not weaken, United Nations role in promoting development.

* France says it is completing nuclear test programme with view to signing test-ban treaty definitively; stresses its support for disarmament.

* Ireland urges establishment of permanent international criminal court, saying violations of humanitarian law threaten global peace and security.

* Mexico says its recent crisis revealed vulnerability of international financial system; countries undergoing structural change need support of IMF and World Bank.

* Foreign Ministers from several countries agree to pursue work to enhance United Nations rapid reaction capacity, Canada and Netherlands announce.

* United Nations condemns Bosnian Serb rocket attacks against four towns in Croatia, noting news of progress in New York peace talks.

* Donors meeting in Brussels pledge total of $993 million to consolidate peace process and assist development in Angola.

* United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to undertake mission to Afghanistan, Liberia and Sierra Leone from 1 to 18 October.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

* WFP warns food shortages are causing irreparable damage to entire generation of Iraqi children; doubles target beneficiary population to 2.15 million.

* Conference of Parties to Basel Convention adopts amendment banning exports of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries.

* Legal Committee begins substantive work for fiftieth session by taking up UNCITRAL report.

* * *

Disappointments and setbacks in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been unfairly attributed to the alleged inefficiency of the United Nations, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told the General Assembly today. He said they were the result of unsatisfactory mandates, a lack of political will on the part of Member States, and a shortage of funds. "It is us, the Members, who cause the difficulties," he stressed. Germany was interested in permanent membership of the Security Council, and would assume greater responsibility as an extension of its commitment to the Organization.

The United Nations could not take on every responsibility, and must focus on what was feasible, Mr. Kinkel continued. The extent and duration of its commitments must be precise; political and military objectives must be clearly defined and mandates must be realistic and coherent. The Organization must act consistently and resolutely, so as not to repeat what had happened in Rwanda or in Zepa and Srebrenica. Cooperation with other organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), must be planned so as to assure speed and efficiency. Regional organizations must play a larger role, as not every problem should go straight to the United Nations.

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In an address to the Assembly today, China's Vice Premier and Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, offered a set of guidelines for United Nations peace-keeping operations. The purposes and principles of the Charter should be observed, in particular the principle of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in states' internal affairs, he said. Disputes should be settled through peaceful means instead of frequent mandatory actions. Double standards and the imposition of the views of one or a few countries on the Security Council should be avoided. Operations should obtain prior consent from the parties concerned, observe strict neutrality and not use force except in self-defence. The Organization should not try to exceed its capability and should never become a party to a conflict.

(more)

The United Nations should pay at least as much attention to development as to peace, he continued. It should play a more dynamic role in galvanizing economic growth in developing countries. Those countries were faced with formidable obstacles to raising the living standards of their people. More than one billion people were living in abject poverty, posing one of the most acute problems for the world community. United Nations reform must result in the strengthening, not the weakening, of the Organization's role in the area of development.

* * *

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette today said that his country had decided to complete the programme of nuclear tests temporarily suspended in 1992 so that it could sign the treaty banning nuclear tests definitively. In an address to the Assembly, he stressed that it was a final test series, limited to what was strictly necessary and held under conditions that had been proved to be harmless. He expressed strong support for disarmament, and called on all States to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty without delay. For its part, France had reduced its nuclear warheads by 15 per cent between 1991 and 1995.

The Foreign Minister went on to say that the world needed the United Nations, citing the increasing number of tasks entrusted to it. However, the Organization was not shown sufficient respect, probably because of a lack of political will and resources. In Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, peace-keepers had found themselves in situations which the United Nations had accepted, but which would never have been accepted by a Member State. Meanwhile, the international community had impassively witnessed unacceptable suffering, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Those tragic events showed the danger of mixing humanitarian and military missions, and the risks posed when missions lacked clarity. The Organization needed to make itself respected when it intervened, he concluded.

* * *

The United Nations has a remarkable record on which to build, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland, Dick Spring, told the Assembly today. It had enshrined the universal obligation of respect for law and good conduct between States as the centre-piece of international relations; it had reduced the danger of global confrontation during the cold war; it had provided an indispensable framework for crucial arms control agreements; it had facilitated decolonization and the dismantling of apartheid; it had restored stability to many parts of the world through its peace-keeping operations; it had set the basic international standards for human rights; and it had sustained efforts to eliminate poverty and improve the living standards of the world's most vulnerable people.

There was growing acceptance that violations of humanitarian law were a threat to international peace and security, he continued. The case for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court was therefore more obvious than ever. Only through such a body could the international community effectively demonstrate that massive human rights violations would never go unpunished. It was also necessary to devise measures to provide early warning of potential situations of human rights abuses.

* * *

The Foreign Minister of Mexico, Angel Gurria, today told the Assembly that his country's recent financial crisis revealed the vulnerability of the international financial system as a whole. While the globalization of production, trade and finance undoubtedly stimulated economic development, it could also lead to situations which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank could not effectively deal with. Structural changes in all countries, particularly the developing ones, called for a stable international financial system, the availability of timely and effective financial support from the Bretton Woods institutions, and the ability to detect and prevent crises.

Mexico had faced its crisis head-on, the Foreign Minister continued. With the support of the international community, it had established a strict economic programme with stringent but necessary adjustment measures. It had sought to mitigate the costs of that programme as far as possible, while constructing a new platform for sustained development. As a result, inflation and interest rates were declining, productivity was rising, and the balance of trade was now showing a surplus. Meanwhile, Mexico was continuing to search for new markets in order to diversify its trade.

* * *

Ministers from several countries have agreed to pursue work to enhance the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations. That development was announced today by the Foreign Ministers of Canada and the Netherlands, Andre Oullet and Hans van Mierlo, whose Governments had put forward proposals on the issue. They made the announcement following a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Denmark, Jamaica, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Senegal and Ukraine, along with Under-Secretary-General Kofi Annan and several military advisers.

Mr. Oullet told correspondents that the idea was to reduce delays between Security Council decisions and deployment in the field. He said the Ministers had agreed to ask their respective United Nations ambassadors to pursue work on the issue and to expand support with a view to substantially enhancing the Organization's capacity to respond quickly to crisis situations. They were not advocating a United Nations army to fight wars, but units to serve in hot spots around the world to help parties make peace and keep peace. Mr. van Mierlo said

the next move would be to work with the Secretariat on identifying the steps needed to advance the process.

* * *

The United Nations today confirmed that Bosnian Serb forces had launched cross-border rocket attacks against several towns in Croatia. Rockets landed in the towns of Kutina, Novska, Ivanic Grad and Pozega, causing extensive damage to property, several injuries and possibly one death. The United Nations condemned the attacks in the strongest possible terms, especially given that they had come amid news of progress in the peace talks in New York.

Meanwhile in Sector South, the Croatian authorities in Knin announced the arrest of 375 people in connection with the looting of homes. That figure included 260 civilians, 70 police and 35 soldiers.

* * *

Donors meeting in Brussels have pledged $993 million to consolidate the peace process and promote development in Angola, exceeding a goal of $700 million, a United Nations spokesman announced today. He noted that many of the donors had linked their pledges to continued implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, and pointed out that pledges made did not always translate into funds disbursed.

The two-day meeting was organized by the Government of Angola, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and hosted by the European Union. A separate consultation was held today to address the enabling policy and regulatory environment that would stimulate private sector investment in Angola.

* * *

In his capacity as United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen will undertake a mission to Afghanistan, Liberia and Sierra Leone from 1 to 18 October, a spokesman for the Organization said today. He will review the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the emergency situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which have failed to draw an adequate international response.

The spokesman stressed that the three countries were in critical need of donor support. New inter-agency appeals would soon be issued for Afghanistan and Liberia. The situation was particularly bad in the African sub-region, with some 5 million people directly affected.

* * *

Alarming food shortages are causing irreparable damage to an entire generation of Iraqi children, according to a senior official of the World Food Programme (WFP). Returning from an assessment mission in Iraq, WFP Chief Emergency Support Officer Dieter Hannusch said conditions there were as bad as anything he had seen in his 24 years of field work, most of which had been spent in Africa.

The Programme has decided to increase its target beneficiary population in Iraq from 1.02 million to 2.15 million. To keep those people alive next year, it will need more than 310,000 metric tons of food, at a cost of $123 million.

* * *

The Third Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes has adopted an amendment to the Convention banning the export of hazardous wastes from developed countries to developing ones. The amendment bans waste exports destined for final disposal with immediate effect. A ban on exports destined for recovery or recycling will be phased in between now and 31 December 1997.

Developing countries lack the financial, technical, legal and institutional capacity for monitoring the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and preventing illegal imports. The amendment to the Convention will strengthen those countries' existing bans and discourage the generation of hazardous wastes at source.

* * *

The Sixth Committee (Legal) has begun its substantive work for the fiftieth session by taking up the report of the United Nations Commission on International Law (UNCITRAL). Also before the Committee is the Secretary-General's report on the granting of travel of assistance to delegates to the Commission from developing countries.

UNCITRAL Chairman Goh Phai Cheng said the Commission was developing draft conventions and model laws to provide a legislative framework for rapid changes in global trade. For example, the draft model law on electronic data interchange (EDI) facilitated the use of electronic media, which were rapidly replacing paper in global business. In the future, UNCITRAL would concentrate on, among other things, build-operate-transfer (BOT) projects, which were used to mobilize private sector resources for infrastructure development.

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UNITED NATIONS

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Permanent members of Security Council stress high political importance of solving United Nations financial problems; say full and punctual payment of contributions is crucial for success of peace-keeping operations.

* Secretary-General welcomes signing of latest agreement by Israel and PLO as another important step towards full implementation of Declaration of Principles.

* United Nations should have stronger role in economic and social fields as poverty poses long-term threat to peace, Sweden tells General Assembly.

* North Korean nuclear issue remains paramount security concern for region and for world, Republic of Korea states.

* Ukraine appeals for more international assistance to close down Chernobyl nuclear plant and mitigate effects of 1986 disaster.

* Ecuador says drug production, consumption and trafficking are devastating traditional social structures; highlights growing problem of corruption.

* * *

Finding a solution to the financial problems affecting the United Nations is a matter of high political importance, according to the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In a statement issued after a meeting with the Secretary-General yesterday, they stressed the need for a sound and fair, and therefore stable, financial basis for the Organization, enabling it to perform its mandates. The Foreign Ministers of China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom participated in the meeting. The Secretary of State of the United States was represented by the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The proper functioning of the United Nations depended on the resources Member States put at its disposal, notably by full and punctual payment of financial contributions, the Ministers pointed out. That was crucial for the success of peace-keeping operations. They also noted the efforts of the High-Level Working Group on the financial situation of the Organization, stressing the need for the urgent adoption of concrete measures to prevent further deterioration of the situation and to increase cost effectiveness. In that regard, they noted the importance of a scale of assessment which would reflect the principle of capacity to pay as precisely as possible.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the signing in Washington D.C. of the latest agreement between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He applauded the leaders of Israel and the PLO and their negotiating teams, whose resolve and dedication to peace had resulted in another important step towards the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the agreement would encourage progress in the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks of the Middle East peace process, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). He stressed that the United Nations was firmly committed to supporting the peace process, and would continue to provide all possible expertise and assistance in the field of economic and social development.

Meanwhile, United Nations Special Coordinator Terje Roed Larsen today appealed to international donors to help ensure the success of the agreement and the peace process. Speaking in Gaza, he said it was essential that they mobilize to assist the Palestinians. "If the development effort fails, the peace process will also fail," he warned.

* * *

Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen today called for a stronger and better defined role for the United Nations in the economic and social fields. In an address to the General Assembly, she said poverty and social misery were the greatest long-term threats to international peace and security. She called for a clearer division of work in development assistance, as well as better coordination, more distinct priorities and more effective management by development agencies. As one of the largest voluntary contributors to United Nations economic and social efforts, Sweden urged other donors to assume their responsibilities to the same degree.

Regarding the United Nations financial crisis, the Foreign Minister stressed that unilateral withholding of contributions could not be justified. While countries demanded more from the Organization, some of them were not

willing to pay their dues, apparently wanting others to foot the bill. The United Nations needed revised scales of assessment to better reflect Members' ability to pay. She went on to say that multilateral cooperation was the most important instrument for mastering the crucial issues of survival.

* * *

The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, Gong Ro-Myung, today said the North Korean nuclear issue remained a paramount security concern for North-East Asia and the world. He urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not only to comply fully with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime, but also to faithfully implement the Geneva Framework agreed to in October 1994. In addition, he called on the Democratic People's Republic to live up to its commitments and obligations under the Joint Declaration for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Foreign Minister Gong also expressed concern over the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic, urging its Government to protect rights by opening its society. He called on the United Nations to do its part to reunite families divided during and after the Korean war. He reaffirmed his country's decision to take part in the United Nations stand-by system, and its willingness to provide some 800 soldiers for that effort, including an infantry battalion, engineering and medical units, and military observers. Hostile acts against United Nations personnel were unacceptable and should not go unpunished, he added.

* * *

Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko of Ukraine today appealed for increased international assistance to close down the Chernobyl nuclear station by the year 2000 and to mitigate the effects of the 1986 disaster. "The earlier we invest money in the solution of this problem, the sooner, and with less negative consequences for the whole of humanity, we shall be able to overcome it," he told the General Assembly. He added that Ukraine would welcome wide international participation in the establishment of an international scientific-technological centre in Chernobyl.

Ukraine's full participation in United Nations activities was impeded by "excessive contribution and existing debt for financing UN peace-keeping operations," the Foreign Minister went on to say. The country could no longer be held hostage by the Organization's financial problems, given its own difficult economic situation during transition and the negative impact of compliance with economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Ukraine had to concentrate its resources on implementing its decisions to renounce nuclear weapons and to decommission the Chenobyl power plant.

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As social conditions deteriorate in many regions of the world, corruption has become an endemic disease, the Foreign Minister of Ecuador, Galo Leoro-Franco, told the Assembly today. He said the production, consumption and trafficking of narcotic drugs were devastating traditional social structures. Violence was on the rise and the brutal methods frequently used to suppress it were counter-productive. In his capacity as Secretary pro-tempore of the Rio Group, he called for the convening of a second international conference on narcotic drugs to examine mechanisms for use in the worldwide fight against drugs.

Turning to the United Nations, the Foreign Minister said the Security Council should be restructured so as to reflect the current membership of the Organization and the new international world order. Restructuring should not be limited to the inclusion of two major industrial powers as permanent members, but should result in appropriate representation for all geographical regions. The veto privilege should not be extended to new members, he continued. Those members who currently possessed that privilege should restrict its use to issues related to Chapter VII of the Charter.

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Secretary-General condemns overthrow of Comoros Government by mercenary group; calls for immediate return to democratic ways.

* United Nations should not be mere instrument of power perpetuation for rich Members, Malaysia tells General Assembly.

* India says United Nations must assume Charter duties to supervise and coordinate global economic policies.

* Debt service hinders reform and exacerbates poverty in many developing countries, Zambia states.

* UNHCR welcomes progress towards political settlement in former Yugoslavia, but says millions of people will still need humanitarian aid this winter.

* UNRWA and UNHCR urge Libya and Middle East States to find solution to Palestinian refugee crisis.

* International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia says policy of prosecuting political and military leaders for war crimes has given it credibility.

* Elisabeth Rehn of Finland is appointed Special Rapporteur on human rights in former Yugoslavia.

* WHO reports outbreaks of dengue and dengue haemorrhagic fever in 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

* DPI provides wide range of services during fiftieth session of General Assembly.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed deep shock on learning that a group of mercenaries had overrun the democratically-elected

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Government of the Comoros and was holding President Said Mohamed Djohar hostage. Strongly condemning the use of force as a means of changing the government of any country, he called for the earliest possible release of the hostages and the return of the Comoros to democratic ways.

* * *

Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Mohamad of Malaysia today expressed his Government's support for the United Nations, but said the tendency to make it an instrument of the rich and powerful should be corrected. In an address to the General Assembly, he said the "narrow national interest of the few is still what the UN is all about." The victors of 1945 had clung tenaciously to the levers of power. The Security Council, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had become mere instruments of power perpetuation, while the Charter was "more honoured in its violations than its adherence."

The Prime Minister criticized the way in which the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty had been pushed through only to be followed by the testing of nuclear weapons by some major powers. He called for an immediate end to testing and the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. He went on to say that the lesson learned from the situations in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Chechnya was that no international order would be defended unless the major powers saw their vital interests at risk. He also criticized Third World leaders who had led their own people down the path of despair and misery following decolonization.

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The United Nations must assume its Charter responsibilities to supervise and coordinate global economic policies, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the Assembly today. He said development strategies, poverty alleviation, debt and resource transfers were burning issues for developing countries; if the Organization ignored them, it would not serve the needs of its membership. In the World Trade Organization (WTO), efforts had been made to link trade to environmental and labour standards. Meanwhile, the World Bank had warned against the proliferation of protectionist demands. If there was a genuine interest in protecting the environment and labour interests in developing countries, why were the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) being sidelined? he asked.

The Foreign Minister also highlighted the problem of terrorism, to which democracies, as open societies, were particularly vulnerable. Citing the recent murder of a Norwegian tourist in India, he said an "empire of terror" was being built up with arms and money sent across borders. The United Nations must speak about terrorism in forthright terms. Terrorism was destructive of peace and democracy because terrorism was war by other means, he concluded.

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The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia, Christon Tembo, told the Assembly that the United Nations required a new vision for the next 50 years. As long as there was a proliferation of weapons, there could never be genuine international peace and security, he said. The resumption of nuclear testing by certain states was not in the spirit of nuclear non-proliferation. Further disarmament measures were needed, especially with regard to land-mines.

Poverty in many developing countries was exacerbated by the cost of servicing debt, which should be reduced, the Foreign Minister continued. For the poorest countries, debt-service ratios should be reduced to 21 per cent of export earnings. The challenge now was to move away from concerns of stabilization and liberalization to stimulation of production, employment and labour productivity. He stressed that domestic reform efforts could only be sustained by generous debt reduction. The debt overhang remained the single most important barrier to recovery and development in Zambia.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, today welcomed the progress being made towards a political settlement in the former Yugoslavia. However, she warned that millions of people would remain dependent on humanitarian aid this winter. UNHCR was currently assisting 3.5 million people in the region, including almost 420,000 people forced from their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia since early July.

Mrs. Ogata urged the international community to ensure that respect for human rights and humanitarian principles -- including the right of refugees to return home -- were included in any discussions on an overall peace plan. Such provisions were crucial for a sustainable peace and recovery in the region, she stressed.

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The heads of two United Nations agencies today urged Libya and States in the Middle East to redouble their efforts to resolve the current crisis facing Palestinian refugees being expelled from Libya or forced to live in desert camps. In a joint statement, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ilter Turkmen, and UNHCR Sadako Ogata called on the governments concerned to exercise compassion and restraint in handling the matter.

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The policy of prosecuting political and military leaders who ordered or failed to punish war crimes has given the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia credibility, according to the President of the Tribunal, Antonio Cassese. However, in a report issued today, he stated that the Tribunal still faced three problems which, in addition to its financial problems, could greatly limit its effectiveness and slow down the pace of its action.

First, the Tribunal had no enforcement agencies and relied on the cooperation of States. Regrettably, some States had not cooperated, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), nor had some de facto authorities such as the self-styled Republics of Krajina and Srpska. The second problem related to the limitations inherent in an international criminal jurisdiction trying offenses committed in a distant country. The Tribunal did not command police officers who could be sent quickly to the scene of a crime. Instead, it had some 80 staff to investigate many perpetrators who had a great many offenses.

The third problem, the report continued, was that the International Tribunal had been established in the midst of an armed conflict. At Nuremberg and Tokyo, the war had ended and many criminals had been captured. By contrast, the Tribunal had to deal with high-ranking planners and perpetrators of war crimes who could take shelter from prosecution under the umbrella of military or political power. Responding to criticism that only Serbs had been indicted so far, the report said the Tribunal did not prosecute members of ethnic groups, but individuals accused of grave crimes.

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The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has appointed Elisabeth Rehn of Finland as Special Rapporteur on human rights in the former Yugoslavia. Tadeusz Mazowiecki of Poland resigned as Special Rapporteur in July, having served the Commission since 1992.

Ms. Rehn is currently a Member of the European Parliament. She served as Finland's Minister for Defence from 1990 to 1994, and as Minister for Equality Affairs from 1991 to 1994. During her term as Defence Minister, Ms. Rehn became well acquainted with United Nations peace-keeping missions and their host countries during official visits to the Middle East and the Balkans.

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Since January, more than 140,000 cases of dengue have been reported by the authorities in 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, more than 3,600 cases of the

more serious dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) have been recorded, along with 38 deaths.

The current outbreak is likely to become the most serious in the Americas since 1981, when Cuba experienced the hemisphere's first DHF epidemic, the WHO warned. At that time, 116,000 individuals were hospitalized over a 3-month period and more than 10,000 cases of DHF were confirmed, resulting in 158 deaths.

Dengue and DHF are transmitted by the bite of the Aedes aegypti mosquito and can cause illness ranging from fever to severe and fatal haemorrhages. Dengue is endemic in 100 countries worldwide, putting 2.5 billion people at risk. Of the 50 million cases which occur annually, 500,000 are hospitalized and 1 to 5 per cent die.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) is providing a wide range of services for the media during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Special events during the session include the visit of Pope John Paul II on 5 October and the fiftieth anniversary special commemorative meeting from 22 to 24 October.

The DPI produces daily press releases in English and French on the work of the General Assembly plenary, the six Main Committees, the General Committee and the Credentials Committee. The Daily Highlights is prepared by the Central News Section and issued as a press release, and can be accessed through the Internet via the United Nations World Wide Web home page. The address is: http://www.un.org.

The Department provides daily news reports in English, French and Spanish via the United Nations News Audio Information System, and coverage of various meetings, briefings and conferences on United Nations Television.

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Israel calls on Syria and Lebanon to stop hesitating over Middle East peace process; says it expects Palestinians to become democratic and prosperous and to fight terrorism.

* Cambodia tells General Assembly it now enjoys peace, freedom and democracy; highlights need for continued international support to deal with land-mine problem.

* Philippines says United Nations peace-keeping operations must not be reformed at expense of development activities; calls for global conference on international migration.

* Secretary-General, in message for World Habitat Day, says challenge of building safe, healthy and productive human settlements begins at neighbourhood level.

* Appeals Chamber upholds jurisdiction of International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia in challenge by first defendant.

* ICFY Co-Chairman and United States Ambassador to Croatia invite Croatian Government and Serb representatives to meeting tomorrow to discuss question of Sector East.

* Fight against international terrorism should be carried out in conformity with international law, Spain tells Legal Committee.

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The Foreign Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, today told the General Assembly that his country had fulfilled all its commitments regarding peace with Egypt and Jordan, freedom and democracy for the Palestinians, and regional economic cooperation. He called on Syria and Lebanon to look at that record and to stop hesitating. Experience had shown that by negotiating on all levels, without timidity or fatigue, peace could be achieved. Israel wanted to join all the countries of the Middle East in a new age for the good of their people.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The choice was before every country to become free, prosperous and democratic, the Foreign Minister continued. He expressed the hope that the richer countries in the Middle East would help the more needy ones. The greatest danger was a combination of high technology and deep hatred, of modern instruments and feudalistic views. Israel expected the Palestinians to become democratic and prosperous, and to fight violence and terrorism. What was happening in the Middle East was a revolution. The distinction was no longer ideological or religious, it was between an old backward economy and one based on technology and science. Peace in the Middle East could not remain a peace between leaders, it had to become a peace between people, he concluded.

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The Foreign Minister of Cambodia, Ung Huot, today thanked the United Nations for its contribution to the peace process in his country, and paid homage to the peace-keepers who had died there. In an address to the General Assembly, he said Cambodia now enjoyed peace, freedom and democracy. He noted that steps were being taken to improve the human rights situation there, and expressed support for the presence and the work of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

Cambodia was in the process of consolidating peace, security and stability, which were the necessary conditions for development and nation-building, he said. It was working closely with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure that the process of rehabilitation and transition to a market economy was well under way. Despite some difficulties immediately after the elections, very encouraging progress had been achieved. A growth rate of 7 per cent was targeted for the period 1995-1997. However, poverty was still a major problem, particularly in rural areas, and Cambodia would need continued international support to become a land-mine-free country.

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The Foreign Secretary of the Philippines, Domingo Siazon, today said that while economic liberalization had been almost universally embraced as a catalyst for development, many countries had resorted to inventive measures of disguised protectionism. He noted that labour shortages in resource-rich and rapidly industrializing economies had induced large-scale migrations of workers. Their presence in foreign lands made them vulnerable, and international cooperation was needed to protect their rights and dignity as human beings. He called on all States to ratify the Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and called for a United Nations-sponsored global conference on international migration.

Turning to the United Nations, he said peace-keeping operations should not be reformed at the expense of development activities. The Philippines supported the idea of streamlining multilateral development institutions and programmes. However, as Chairman of the Group of 77, it could not accept moves to abolish the development agencies in the name of division of labour or comparative advantage. The international community must augment the resources for those agencies, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, not reduce them. He deplored the position of some States which refused to raise their contributions to international financial institutions, while preventing others from doing so in order to maintain their dominant role in those bodies.

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The challenge of building human settlements which are safe, stable, healthy and productive begins at the neighbourhood level, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message on the occasion of World Habitat Day, he said women and men must work together in solidarity to build cities from the bottom up. That was the way to improve housing, services and employment opportunities.

"It is in our neighbourhoods where we learn to share a common locality, form social bonds and take responsibility for the impact of our actions on others," he continued. "It is in our neighbourhoods that we develop the sense of tolerance and solidarity that brings with it friendship, self-confidence and faith in our fellow human beings. The neighbourhood is the threshold between the family and the society at large."

The Secretary-General expressed the hope that at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul next June, the international community would commit itself through tangible programmes and affordable strategies to support a truly worthwhile undertaking: to help men, women and children to build a better world for themselves.

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The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia today unanimously upheld the Tribunal's jurisdiction in the case against its first defendant, Dusko Tadic. The decision of the five-member Chamber cleared the way for the case to proceed towards trial later this autumn.

In a motion filed with the Trial Chamber in June, Mr. Tadic challenged the authority of the Tribunal on three grounds: he claimed that it had been unlawfully established; that it had been improperly given primacy over

national courts; and that it lacked authority to judge offences committed in the course of civil wars. The Trial Chamber rejected all three challenges in August and the accused filed an immediate appeal.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General today appointed Fouad Abdel-Moneim Riad as a Judge of the International Tribunal. Mr. Riad, an Egyptian national, will serve the remainder of the term of office of Judge George Abi-Saab, who resigned to resume his academic activities.

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The Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg, and the United States Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, have invited representatives of the Croatian Government and the local Serb authorities to a meeting tomorrow to discuss the question of Sector East. The meeting will take place at the United Nations headquarters in Erdut. The Croat delegation will be led by Hrvoje Sarinic, while the Serb delegation will be led by Milan Milanovic.

In a related development, United States mediator Richard Holbrooke met with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman over the weekend. Mr. Holbrooke was quoted as saying that efforts to solve the dispute over Sector East had reached a critical point, and that a peaceful reintegration of the Serb-held territory into Croatia should be the solution. However, Croatia had not shifted from the position that it would regain Sector East by force if necessary.

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The fight against international terrorism should be carried out in conformity with international law, the representative of Spain told the Sixth Committee (Legal) this morning as it began its consideration of measures to eliminate international terrorism. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, D. Jorge Sanchez encouraged the widest possible participation of States in international instruments condemning terrorism. He also stressed the need for cooperation in relation to extradition and the exchange of information on terrorism.

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